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Library of Congress Report Looks at the Role of Books in the Future

The future of the book in the electronic age and how new technologies affect books, reading, and learning in America are topics at the heart of a new Library of Congress publication, an extensive supplement to an earlier report made to the Congress, *Books in Our Future.* The original report by Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin is included in this 388-page, hard-bound publication, *Books in Our Future: Perspectives and Proposals.*

The new publication presents the views of 21 project advisors and project consultants, and reproduces excerpts from several studies published about books and reading since the original report was first issued three years ago.

Books in Our Future: Perspectives and Proposals is organized into six sections: "Reading and Learning," "Reading and Society," "Technology and the Future of the Book," "The Book Professions: Publishing," "The Book Professions: Librarianship," and "Books Present and Future." It was edited by John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress and director of the Book in the Future Project.

Members of the Library's Advisory Committee on the Book in the Future who contributed to the volume are Gerald Holton (chair), William O. Baker, Jacques Barzun, Lewis M. Branscomb, John Chancellor, Kenneth E. Dowlin, Robert F. Erburu, Warren J. Haas, Frederick G. Kilgour, Louis L'Amour, F. Wilfred Lancaster, Sol M. Linowitz, Ruth B. Love, Russell G. Meyerand, Jr., Edmund D. Pellegrino, Morris Philipson, Gerard Piel, Frank H.T. Rhodes, Joan M. Ripley, Phyllis Steckler, and Robert Wedgeworth. Other contributors are Center for the Book advisors and consultants:

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Simon Michael Bessie, Joseph F. Brinley, Jr., Benjamin M. Compaine, Helen Dalrymple, Ann Heidbreder Eastman, Charles A. Goodrum, Dan Lacy, James R. Squire, and William J. Welsh.

Congress established the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in 1977 to stimulate public interest in books and reading and to encourage the study of books and the printed word. The center's symposia, publications, and projects are supported primarily by private contributions from individuals and corporations and occasionally by funds from other government agencies.

The following organizations supported the Book in the Future project: The New York Times Company Foundation, International Thomson, the McGraw-Hill Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Home Library Foundation, the Book-of-the-Month Club, Ingram Industries, and the College of Arts and Sciences at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va.

The price of *Books in Our Future: Perspectives and Proposals* is $16. It may be purchased in person at the Information and Sales Shop at the Library of Congress or ordered prepaid from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. (Stock number 030-000-00188-5 should be cited in mail orders.)

DEZ Update

Highlights on Pilot Plant and Other Plans

Mechanical construction is complete for the Library's pilot mass deacidification plant in Houston, Tex. A number of design and engineering improvements have been made in the new pilot facility by a team of engineers employed by Texas Alkyls and S&B Engineering. It is expected that start-up activities will proceed for one to two months, after which engineering experiments will begin. Information from experiments conducted through March 1988 will be used to collect data for use in the design of the Library's large-scale facility to be built at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Md.

In addition to its work on the pilot plant, the Library is actively engaged in a number of other projects in anticipation of implementing the DEZ (diethyl zinc) treatment of the collections. Scientists in the Library's Preservation Research and Testing Office are developing analytical testing procedures that can be applied to each deacidification run to ensure adherence to quality-control criteria. A study of the loading docks for the Library's Jefferson and Madison Buildings has been completed to outline modifications needed to install automatic lifts to handle the book-transport carts. Planning is also proceeding for prospective preservation activities, such as relabeling, rebinding, and preservation microfilming, that will take place prior to treatment of an entire class of books. The Library anticipates that Class E, United States History, will be the first class to receive treatment. Class E contains approximately 200,000 volumes.

The *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* is issued weekly by the Information Office of the Library of Congress and distributed free of charge to publicly supported libraries and research institutions, academic libraries, learned societies, and allied organizations in the United States.

Comparable institutions and organizations in other countries may arrange to receive the *Bulletin* on an exchange basis by applying in writing to the Library's Exchange and Gift Division. All other correspondence should be addressed to the LC *Information Bulletin*, Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540.

Bruce Tapper, Editor

Planning Meeting Is Held for Conference On the Book in the Islamic World

Leading scholars in the field of Islamic Studies met with Library of Congress staff members to discuss a proposed International Conference on the Book in the Islamic World. The meeting was sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

Participants included Kathleen R. F. Burrill, Columbia University; Charles Butterworth, University of Maryland; Dale Eickelman, New York University; Muhsin Mahdi, Harvard University; Roy P. Mottahedeh, Harvard University; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, George Washington University; Wadad al-Qadi, Yale University; Franz Rosenthal, Yale University; Priscella Soucek, New York University; and Robert Thomas, United States Information Agency. Attending from the Library of Congress were George N. Atiyeh, head of the Near East Section and chair of the discussion; Michael W. Albin, chief of the Order Division; John Y. Cole, director of the Center for the Book; and E. Christian Filstrup, chief of the Overseas Operations Division.

The goal of the organizers is to hold the conference at the Library of Congress in late 1990.

Turning Information into Knowledge and Distilling Knowledge into Wisdom

Excerpts of Remarks by Librarian of Congress James H. Billington
At a Press Conference on September 14

The following are excerpts of informal replies made to questions at a press conference on the day of Dr. Billington's swearing-in as Librarian of Congress. While his remarks do not reflect long-range planning, they do offer insight into his initial thoughts and feelings about the future role of the Library of Congress in the nation and the world.

Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom

"Information is raw material, knowledge is integrated and selected raw material that can be transmitted in an impersonal form. Wisdom is a quality that resides in people—particularly those who live with and generate knowledge."

The Raw Material of Information

The Future of the Book

"As far as organizing and illuminating the human mind is concerned, the book has played an absolutely extraordinary role. The creation of modern democracy was inconceivable without the book.

"So, there is a bias in favor of the book, which does not mean a closed mind towards new technology, but an insistence that the new technology explains what it can do, what it uniquely can do.

"The new technologies will take over a lot of things that are currently going into books. And there will be a greater burden on the book to do integrative, imaginative things, rather than be simply inefficient transmitters of raw information, which is what a great many books are.

"I see a great future for the book. Books may not proliferate in numbers as much as they have in recent years, but they may become qualitatively better. I would even say that they have to become qualitatively better, or we are going to have decay of the grey matter crucial to democracy."

Conservation Issues

"It is a terrifying thought, that the historical record of America as it became a great, complex, continental, multi-ethnic industrialized society is seriously jeopardized simply because we do not pay any attention to the fact that it is not dramatically falling apart but only slowly disintegrating."

"It is a national problem; the Library of Congress cannot solve it all, but it certainly is a pressing problem which the Library has made a substantial investment in."

New Technologies

"How much should be continued to be put out in book form as distinguished from being put directly on some form of electronic communication?

"The trick here is going to be one of discrimination and choice. Because you cannot save everything from this process of slow disintegration the question of choice puts a tremendous burden on us as custodians of much of the national memory.

"There are a whole set of questions that a free society has to think through creatively before they end up controlling us in ways that we hadn't anticipated."

"There are frontiers to be explored in terms of the new technologies, for sharing not only the cataloging burdens of the libraries of the nation—that is done

(Continued on p. 462)

New Librarian of Congress Meets Em

James H. Billington and his family were warmly wel employees at a reception following his swearing-in on Se The reception, held in the Madison Hall of the James M by the Library of Congress Professional Association, the L Association (WRA), the Daniel A. P. Murray Afro-Ame of Congress Federal Credit Union. The WRA Cooking and arranged for volunteers to serve them. Music at the entra was provided by Dave Littlefield's Sheiks of Dixie.

Members of the receiving line (above), left to right, Ted Cassell, president, Daniel A. P. Murray Afro-American Culture Association; Brent Kendrick, president, LCPA; Marjorie Billington; James H. Billington; Peter Watters, president, LC Federal Credit Union; and Reba Burruss, former president, WRA.

Dr. Billington and Mrs. Billington (above) greet Sarah Pritchard, reference specialist in women's studies, General Reading Rooms Division.

Dave Littlefield's Sheiks of Dixie (above) offer the new Librarian a lively welcome from the James Madison Memorial Building steps of Independence Plaza.

Library of Congress employees in the Madison Hall receiving line (right) congratulate and meet the new Librarian of Congress and his wife, Marjorie, right foreground.

Employees at Huge Staff Reception

ly welcomed by thousands of Library of Congress on September 14.
mes Madison Memorial Building, was sponsored , the Library of Congress Welfare and Recreation d American Culture Association, and the Library ooking Club provided 130 dozen gourmet cookies e entrance to the James Madison Memorial Building e.

Library employees line the hallways of the James Madison Memorial Building (above) to wait their turns to meet Dr. Billington, members of his family, and officials of organizations that were hosts for the reception.

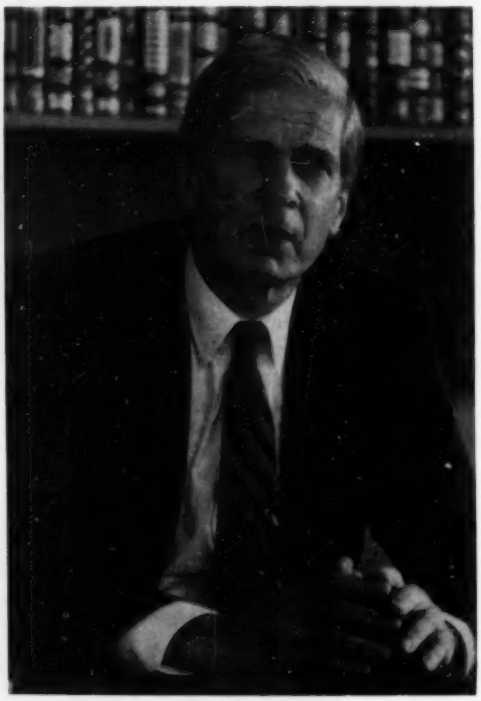
Members of the new Librarian's family (above, left to right), sons Thomas K. and James H. Billington, Jr., son-in-law Duncan Fischer, M.D., and daughter, Anne Billington Fischer, meet George Atiyeh, head, Near East Section of the African and Middle Eastern Division, and James Mitchell, manager, Library of Congress Federal Credit Union (shaking hands).

WRA Cooking Club members (above) are, left to right, Labanya Borra, Leela Lulla, Jean Hamilton, Jean Kridle, Maurvene Williams, Norma Hendrickson, and Kay Elsasser. The Cooking Club donated cookies for Dr. Billington's reception.

Press Conference *(Continued from p. 459)*
fundamentally here for libraries everywhere—but also some of the content of this great library."

Service to Congress

"A very important way the Library serves our legislators is through the Congressional Research Service, not only by preparing good reports, but by having people of wisdom who can relate to the harassed legislator looking not just for a report, but for someone to have a serious talk with, and who can suggest one or two books to read."



Service to the Nation and the World

"There are new technologies emerging, offering opportunities which may even be obligations. We may find new ways to share some of the richness of this repository of national memory with people in place. For instance, someone in a library in the midwest or the south, who doesn't perhaps have access to a major library, might hope to bring in through a computer or some other device, some of the contents of the Library, not only through the interlibrary loan or the exchanges that are already part of the warp and woof of this and other great research libraries."

"The Library of Congress is an enormous national resource which is perhaps insufficiently appreciated. It is appreciated by anybody who does serious research on the world, but the broader public needs to know that it is not only the greatest repository of information, but the most active collector of information in all the great languages and cultures of the world. It is the only library in the world that even attempts to do this. It is an extraordinary potential national asset. Not just for the scholars, but for the commercial and industrial life of the country, for its effective governance, for the solving of all kinds of social problems, and for the better understanding of all manner of technical things, as well as historical and humanistic ones."

Role of the Library in Creating Wisdom

"Simply spreading a lot of information around through a lot of new technological devices doesn't mean anything if one doesn't have here the Library playing a catalytic, if not a leadership role, in helping turn information into knowledge and distill it all into some wisdom."

"When you have such a concentration of knowledge and the ability to cross-correlate things in different fields and different languages in one place—multimedia encyclopedia, as Dan Boorstin so eloquently described it—it is a stimulating atmosphere in which to distill wisdom."

"The distillation of wisdom requires an atmosphere hospitable to world-class scholars, working with fearless independence and integrity and making the fullest possible use of this extraordinarily open facility."

"This city has had a great intellectual growth and I've been happy at least to have had a window on that process at the Wilson Center where we brought 1,170 scholars from all over the world, in 17 years of its existence. We have had a chance to see how much the Library means to the scholars of the world, and how creative the interaction of this great facility is with great minds.

"We have had great artistic performers coming to Washington in the last few years, and we have always had the great political minds here. But we're starting to get more and more of the world's good minds coming here to the various think tanks and for the much-quickening intellectual life; we have much of the great legal talent of the world concentrated here.

"But what's really needed is intellectual peaks and intellectual intensity. And so when I say not just spreading out broadly, but moving in deeply, that is what I mean. We want to have the deep mind, the creative mind, the fundamental mind at work in and around this place.

"We have many fine minds in the Library of Congress in various places, and I don't mean to imply that the work done by specialists in very narrow areas is not terribly important. It is. In many ways, it is the most fundamental thing of all. But they, too, are stimulated and their spirits are uplifted by being in the presence of the stimulating great minds of the world. The Council of Scholars, the Center for the Book, and many of the ongoing programs of the Library are a direction which I hope we can develop."

"We also must have some great acts of intellectual celebration—because celebrating the life of the mind is something that a free people needs to do. I think it is an appropriate thing to do in the capital of this country, because in the United States we have developed the largest, the most ambitious, and in many divisions, the best intellectual apparatus in the world—our great system of research universities, research libraries, think tanks. It's a tremendous American accomplishment. We should celebrate it, we should honor it, and we should develop it."

"In the last analysis, it is the ranging, the discriminating, the challenging mind that will have to sort out and make some sense of all this profusion of publication and information that exists in our world, and establish some priorities within it.

"We have a lot of such minds here at the Library, and the nation should be grateful for their talents. It will be my privilege to work with them and really help them do what they are already doing."

Importance of Outreach

"This Library is such a colossal reservoir of important things and beautiful things, that not to share them with a broader audience and not to use the printed form, which is still in many ways the most democratic and most universally available, would be almost a dereliction of duty."

"In many of the great collections of this Library there are great riches, the map collection, for instance, or the great collection of posters and the great collection of photographs and prints. Now one doesn't want to violate these collections, or turn them into totally touring operations. But there is so much here, and much of it is rarely seen by people, that it should be possible to have more exhibits circulating to local libraries.

"One of the things that I hope to do in the first year or so that I'm here is in fact to visit some of the variety of libraries that exist in this country, so that the close relationship that exists between the nation's Library and the libraries of the nation can be strengthened and also enriched. Because the ingenuity and the imagination of our people isn't all concentrated here, we need to learn from what these people are doing. But at the same time, I think they would appreciate the opportunity to know more about things here in the Nation's library."

Libraries and Wisdom

"One of the great debts that I as a working scholar have owed to libraries is that I have had the great privilege of not only having some fine teachers in schools and universities, but knowing some people in libraries who really had bits and pieces of that quality of wisdom, who shared it with me and inspired me with it—and that's a wonderful quality. And it's underappreciated in our country."

"I remember the first major book I read was *War and Peace,* which was pretty formidable. All books seemed rather short since that one. But it was another case of the importance of books. My old Russian teacher, an émigré who was a wonderful lady, who got me on books early, answered my question about how the Russians were doing so well at Stalingrad against the German Army, 'You have to read *War and Peace.*' And I always remembered that, because it indicated that the way you answered a question was to read not today's newspaper, but a book written about something that happened 150 years ago.

"The field of Russian history was not terribly well developed in the period when I got into it, and you had to do your own work, which meant you had to forage in books a lot. It got me into libraries, in addition to my Russian language teacher who also got me into libraries. Once you get into libraries, you're hooked."

Meetings and Events Around the Library

Monday, November 2
☐ "Slow Fires: On Preservation of the Human Record," a film discussing the problem of paper deterioration and efforts in the U.S. and abroad to deal with it. Mumford Room, 12 noon. **For staff members.**

Tuesday, November 3
☐ SIG on Performing Arts: Everette Larson, reference librarian, Hispanic Division, discusses the Library's collections of Spanish plays. Room LM 642, 12:10 p.m. **For staff members.**

Wednesday, November 4
☐ Air Force Sinfonietta concert. Coolidge Auditorium, 12:15 p.m.

Thursday, November 5
☐ "Festival of Death and Life," illustrated lecture by Jack Santino, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University. American Folklife Center program. Whittall Pavilion, Jefferson Building, 12 noon.

Friday, November 6
☐ Concert with David Shifrin, clarinet, and Menahem Pressler, piano. Coolidge Auditorium, 8 p.m. Free; no tickets required.

Monday, November 9
☐ "Slow Fires: On Preservation of the Human Record," a film discussing the problem of paper deterioration and efforts in the U.S. and abroad to deal with it. Mumford Room, 12 noon. **For staff members.**

☐ Poetry reading with August Kleinzahler and Timothy Steele. Coolidge Auditorium, 8 p.m. Free, no tickets required.

Tuesday, November 10
☐ LCPA annual membership meeting. Mumford Room, noon to 1 p.m. **For members and staff.**

Thursday, November 12
☐ Exhibition, "Contemporary Bulgarian Printmakers," on ground floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building. To continue through May 1, 1988.

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